(d) whether Government have received any memorandum regarding parity/discrepancy in pay scale of Rs. 3050/- for Mechanical Engineer working as industrial workman Grade I in Bharatiya Note Mudran?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PARANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) RBI has informed that BRBNMPL is a separate entity registered under the Companies Act, 1956 with its own Board of Directors, management structure, pay scales and service conditions. Its pay-scales bear a relationship to those prevailing in the same industry i.e. Government Currency Presses.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Expenditure Reforms Commission in its Third Report submitted on 23rd December, 2000, *inter-alia*, suggested exploration of the option of placing India Security Press and four Indian Government Mints under a Corporate body. On a subsequent review of functions and performance of all the security units it was felt that the process for corporatisation of Mints and Presses should be pursued.

Flouting of FDI guidelines

1477. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that FDI guidelines permit any foreign company to hold upto 100 percent of equity under automatic route;

(b) if so, the reasons for objections raised by the nodal Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for restricting the stake to 25.99 per cent only for preferential allotment of equity shares by Balaji Telefilms Ltd. to Asian Broadcasting Ltd; and

(c) whether Information & Broadcasting Ministry has been warned by Government for deliberately flouting the FDI guidelines and for suppressing the facts before Foreign Investment Promotion Board and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Government has put in place a liberal FDI policy and most of the sectors have been placed under the automatic route for FDI up to 100% except for a few sectors where caps have been prescribed and/or prior approval of Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) is required.

(b) While FDI up to 100% is allowed in production of Television software, the FIPB approved M/s Asian Broadcasting Ltd.'s application (an affiliate of Star Group/News Corporation) to hold a maximum stake of 25.99% in Balaji Telefilms Ltd. in consonance with provisions of SEBI's Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers (SAST) Regulations, 1997 subject to standard conditions including not undertaking Broadcasting from Indian soil without prior specific approval.

(c) No, Sir, does not arise. The Company has sought to restrict it's stake to 25.99 percent.

Eight per cent growth target

1478. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) how Government propose to achieve the target of eight per cent growth in a time bound manner; and

(b) if so, give details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The National Common Minimum Programme of the Government envisages a real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 7 to 8 per cent. The Government has taken a number of measures to achieve higher growth of the economy. These, *inter alia*, include emphasis on enhanced public investment, diversifying agriculture, promotion of public-private partnership for infrastructure development, liberalisation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and facilitating growth in industries and services sector through an enabling policy environment.

Direct allocation of funds to Panchayats

1479. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating allocation of funds directly to Panchayats bypassing the State Governments;

(b) whether it is a fact that several State Governments have vehemently opposed the proposed move of the Central Government; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.